

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CARACA 04110 172149Z

67

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 SSO-00

NSCE-00 /065 W

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P 172045Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8419

INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

UNCLAS CARACAS 4110

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A) PFOR VE ENRG

SUBJ: COMMENTS BY VENEZUELAN FOREIGN MINISTER ON THE
SECRETARY'S VISIT AND VENEZUELA'S LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES

BEGIN SUMMARY. FOREIGN MINISTER RAMON ESCOVAR SALOM STATES
THAT HE WILL DISCUSS THE "FAILURE" OF THE PARIS PRODUCER/CONSUMER
PREPCON WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER DURING HIS APRIL 26-27
VISIT TO CARACAS AND THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A DIALOGUE
WITH THE SECRETARY BASED ON "MUTUAL RESPECT." HE DENIES THAT
VENEZUELA WISHED TO BE THE LEADER OF LATIN AMERICA. END
SUMMARY.

1. AT THE INVITATION OF THE VENEZUELAN CONGRESS, ESCOVAR APRIL 16
APPEARED BEFORE THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN POLICY AND GAVE
AN HOUR-LONG EXPLANATION OF VENEZUELA'S INTERNATIONAL POLICIES.
HIS STATEMENTS ON THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE PARIS PREPCON ARE
REPORTED SEPTEL. ACCORDING TO VARIOUS PRESS REPORTS, ESCOVAR'S
PRINCIPAL COMMENTS ON OTHER MATTERS WERE AS FOLLOWS:

(A) KISSINGER VISIT TO VENEZUELA -- ESCOVAR SAID THAT VENEZUELA
HOPES TO HAVE A "FRANK AND POSITIVE" EXCHANGE WITH THE SECRETARY.
ESCOVAR SAID THAT THE SECRETARY'S VISIT TO CARACAS WOULD NOT
INCLUDE ANY FORMAL CEREMONIES AND THAT MEETINGS WOULD BE INFORMAL
WORKING SESSIONS; THERE WOULD BE NO RIGID AGENDA, ALTHOUGH
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HE AND THE SECRETARY WOULD DISCUSS THE FAILURE OF THE PARIS

CONFERENCE.

"WHAT WE WANT FROM KISSINGER IS HELP IN FINDING SOLUTIONS TO CURRENT PROBLEMS."

ESCOVAR RECALLED THAT IN HIS MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY A FEW MONTHS AGO, HE COMMUNICATED A FUNDAMENTAL COMPLAINT, NAMELY THAT THE U.S. HAS IGNORED LATIN AMERICA. HE THOUGHT THAT THIS NEGLECT WAS REFLECTED IN THE U.S. PRESS, WHICH GIVES PRACTICALLY NO COVERAGE TO THE NEWS FROM VENEZUELA AND LATIN AMERICA, BUT HE ADDED THAT LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES THEMSELVES WERE AT FAULT FOR NOT EXPLAINING THEIR POLICY POSITIONS. ESCOVAR STATED THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO "START HAVING A DIFFERENT KIND OF DIALOGUE WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE, A DIALOGUE OF MUTUAL RESPECT."

(B) VENEZUELA'S LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES -- REGARDING PRESIDENT PEREZ'S VISITS TO PERU, ALGERIA, MEXICO AND PANAMA, ESCOVAR SAID THAT VENEZUELA TRADITIONALLY HAD AN OUTWARD-LOOKING ORIENTATION AND THAT OIL FURTHER OBLIGATED THE COUNTRY TO ACT WITHIN A GLOBAL FRAMEWORK.

HOWEVER, "IT IS JUST TALK THAT VENEZUELA WANTS TO BE THE LEADER OF LATIN AMERICA. WHAT VENEZUELA WANTS IS THAT LATIN AMERICA BE A LEADER IN THE WORLD."

ESCOVAR NOTED THAT CARACAS WILL BE THE SITE OF A MEETING OF LATIN AMERICAN HEADS OF STATE SOMETIME THIS YEAR, AND THAT "WE ARE WORKING ON THE AGENDA, WHICH IS RATHER COMPLEX." HE EXPLAINED THAT THE PROPOSED LATIN AMERICAN ECONOMIC SYSTEM (SELA) WILL BE "NOTHING MORE THAN A SYSTEM TO FACILITATE CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS."

2. THE MEMBERS OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE, REPRESENTING NEARLY ALL THE POLITICAL PARTIES, REPORTEDLY REACTED FAVORABLY TO ESCOVAR'S PRESENTATION. THEY ESPECIALLY ENDORSED HIS AND PRESIDENT PEREZ'S PLANS FOR DEVELOPING, IN CLOSE COLLABORATION WITH THE MINISTRIES DEALING WITH ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, A MORE ACTIVE VENEZUELAN DIPLOMATIC SERVICE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, MINISTERIAL VISITS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, SPEECHES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975CARACA04110
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750135-0425
From: CARACAS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750439/aaaabkfe.tel
Line Count: 98
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 JUL 2003 by SilvaL0>; APPROVED <30 JAN 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: COMMENTS BY VENEZUELAN FOREIGN MINISTER ON THE SECRETARY'S VISIT AND VENEZUELA'S LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES
TAGS: OVIP, PFOR, ENRG, VE, US, XM, (KISSINGER, HENRY A), (ESCOVAR SALOM, RAMON)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006